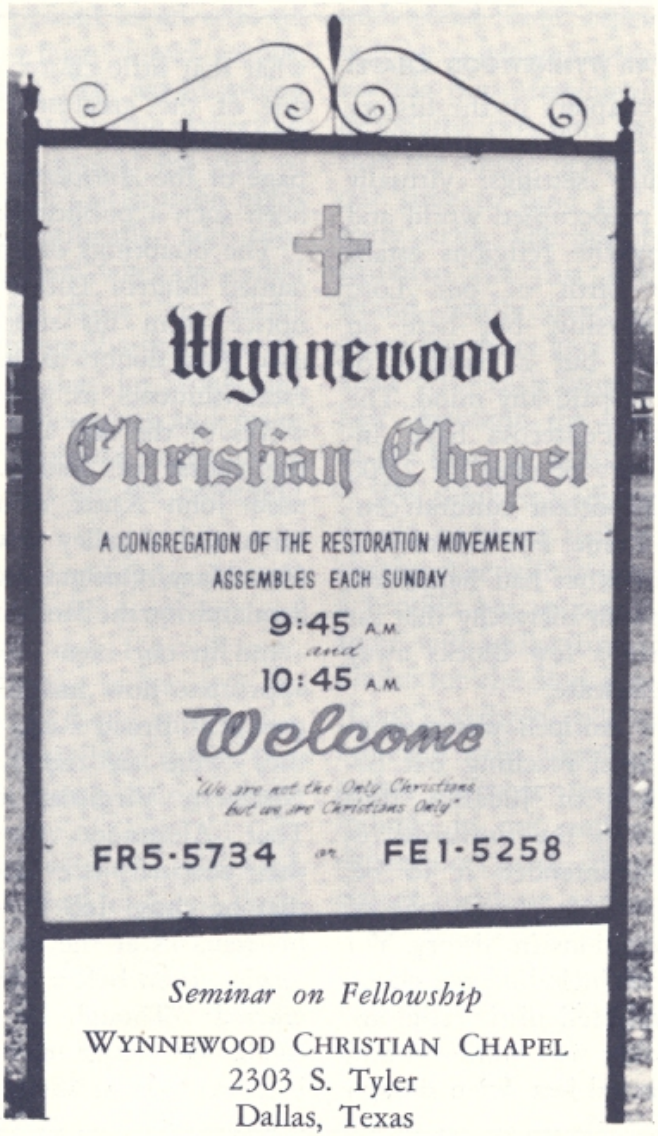
RESTORATION REVIEW



Seminar on Fellowship

WYNNEWOOD CHRISTIAN CHAPEL
2303 S. Tyler
Dallas, Texas

JUNE 15-18

"Above all these things put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." Col. 3:14

Volume 7, No. 6 **June, 1965**

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FREEDOM RINGS AT WYNNEWOOD CHAPEL

The greatest chapters in the history of Christianity have been written in relatively obscure settings, virtually unnoticed by a preoccupied world and even ignored by the religious establishments. The birth of our Lord caused angels to sing, but here on earth there were but a handful of humble shepherds paid any mind. The great events of Pentecost have influenced the history of man for 2,000 years, but the important cultural centers of Athens, Rome, and Alexandria knew nothing of what had happened, and even the Jewish hierarchy that sat on the Sanhedrin a few blocks away were probably unaware.

The church at Antioch was responsible for the gospel reaching out beyond the confines of Judaism, thus making Christianity the *universal* religion that God intended it to be, which made that little church one of the great congregations in history. Yet the passing world, including the clergy of the Jewish and Hellenistic religions, knew little of what was going on and could not have cared less. Even though what that little church did has become one of the greatest stories ever told, it would never have made the front page of the *Antioch Herald,* had there been such a publication.

The doubtings of an obscure monk named Martin Luther attracted little notice from his superiors, but God used those doubts to shake the religious establishments as a storm tosses the waves of the sea, and thus to change the course of history. Likewise God used John Knox, a man of humble birth and a galley slave, to stand before Mary, Queen of Scots, and save Scotland for the Reformation.

And in our own Movement we can appreciate how insignificant the little group at Brush Run, tucked away as they were in the isolated hills of Northern Virginia, must have felt. That Alexander Campbell realized their obscurity is evident from the fact that he chose Job 8:7 as the text for his remarks at the congregation's first service, even before the log house was erected: "Though thy beginning was small, thy latter end should greatly increase." As young Alex stood there on a temporary stand tinder the shade of a spreading tree even he little realized what God had in store for him. Four millions of us who are heirs

of the Movement that started then can testify to the use that God can make of obscure efforts.

And little did Thomas Campbell realize that the *Declaration and Address* that he composed in an attic on Addison Welch's farm would inspire reformatory efforts that would sweep like a prairie fire across the American frontier. When he moved his pen to say: "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one," and when he called people to be free from "the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit," he little dreamed that he would influence countless thousands and make a significant contribution to the unity of all churches that we see emerging in our day.

God is still making history according to His own good purposes, and we can be assured that He will continue to choose "what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God." (1 Cor. 1:28-29). We can believe that God is at work in the lives of men --- *little* men as the world would appraise them --- who are little noticed by their own generation, but who are making an important contribution toward the realization of the prayer uttered by our Lord for the oneness of his people. God, we can believe, is also using churches to this end, however small or despised they may be. No doubt there are many of these across the earth, both large and small, where the Spirit is at work to cultivate brotherhood among people distraught by faction.

This is why we believe something important is taking place at Wynnewood Chapel in Dallas, June 15-18. Men are meeting together who come from most all the backgrounds of the Restoration Movement in order to understand each other better. There will be a few other concerned people *outside* our Movement who will also be on the program, men who believe that the Spirit of God is at work in our time to bind up the wounds of party strife. The brethren that will be gathered for this seminar on unity would hardly have spoken to each other ten years ago, much less sharing ideas with each other on how we can best "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:'

We think something is achieved if we do no more than to cultivate that charity that will at least listen to what a brother has to say. At this meeting some will really *listen* to a premillennialist for the first time in their lives. "Class" brethren and "anti-class" brethren will talk together and pray together without feeling obligated to indulge in the endless and profitless debate on classes. They can talk about classes, of course, and nearly everything comes up sooner or later at these meetings, but *they are free simply to be together as brethren,* and not for a big debate.

A basic assumption underlying such gatherings is that we will never achieve the oneness for which our Lord prayed until we learn to talk and visit with each other. Too long we have followed the fallacy that we must first unite before we can be together. We

move toward unity only when we are able to be with one another and come to understand each other better.

One only needs to attend such a meeting to see that no one advocates "fellowshipping anybody and everybody," as some of the critics charge. It is assumed that we are already *brethren* because we are all "in Christ" together. We are only saying that people who are brothers should treat each other like brothers. No one is saying that we should honor as a brother anyone who is not a brother.

Neither does the meeting mean that anybody is asked to endorse anything that he disapproves, or to give his approval to something that he does not believe in. No one is asked to surrender any truth he holds. We furthermore contend that the opinions that a man holds are his own private property and that they are between him and his God. He acts unbrotherly if he tries to impose his opinions upon me, and I behave uncharitably if I seek to force mine upon him. Such is the spirit of these unity meetings.

This does not mean that everything is sugar and spice and everything nice, or that issues are not sometimes fervently and candidly discussed, for they usually are. The subjects to be discussed at Wynnewood Chapel are fraught with such deep meaning that there will certainly be disagreement. Some of the subjects are: the nature of faith and opinion, the pattern of Christian unity, law and grace, preaching and teaching, congregational discipline, heresy, the church and the individual, who is my Christian brother?, and the Holy Spirit and unity.

We believe one purpose of brotherhood is the cultivation of a free spirit within man so that he may grow toward his own self-realization. We are to help each other as brothers in Christ to think and to study, and we are to encourage differences. God never intended that we be carbon copies of each other. The Wynnewood gathering is intended to motivate that kind of fluidity of thought that makes one a true individual before God. All this means that we account each other as free men in Christ.

The overseers of the Wynnewood Chapel congregation, Guy Land and L. M. Roberts, are to be commended for making this meeting possible. One would think that our great Restoration Movement, born and bred in the unity concept, would rally behind such efforts; but the coolness of many of our groups is amazing. It makes one wonder if we really believe in unity. If you are one who does, and if you believe in giving it a try, however lame the effort, then we cordially invite you to sit with us these four days.

ONLY .006% OF WORLD ARE CHRISTIANS!

This business of trying to number the Christians in a given city or in the entire world is risky. It may reflect an attitude that brings one *farther* from the Kingdom of Heaven rather than *closer,* for we are to remember that Jesus said 'You are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven" to a man who would not have been numbered by the orthodox of his day. But he

believed that the greatest commandant of all was to love God with all one's personality, and the second greatest was to love one's neighbor as oneself, and he realized this meant more than being orthodox (Mk. 12:32-34). Lest we list someone as *far* that Jesus considers *not far,* we should think twice before we start twirling a globe and numbering the Christians in all the countries of the world.

Even Paul had to be told by God in a vision while the apostle was in Corinth: "I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10). Elijah also had to be straightened out when he started numbering. He never got beyond *one,* supposing himself to be the only one worthy to be on the approved list. When the Lord gave his version it turned out to be about 7,000 times greater than the prophet had supposed (Rom. 11:4).

But the limitations of a Paul or an Elijah need not deter the wisdom that comes out of Abilene. The brethren out there who direct the Herald of Truth radio and TV programs are prepared to tell us precisely how many Christians there are in the world. It is .006%. Presto! they know just like that! Marvelous, isn't it? I suppose we may conclude that we have some brethren so wise in the ways of heaven that they are prepared to help the Master when he sits upon His throne in judgment --- just in case He happens to need them.

Notice this paragraph from a leaflet sent out by the Abilene promoters in an effort to raise millions of dollars more from Churches of Christ:

> There are fewer Christians today --- in relation to the world's population --- than at the end of the first year of the Church's establishment almost 2,000 years ago. Within 30 years after the establishment of the Church, Paul, in writing to the Colossians, stated that the Gospel had been preached "in all creation under Heaven." Yet, today, there are only an estimated 2 million baptized believers --- .006% of the world's population.

You will observe that "the estimated 2 millions baptized believers" includes only the non-instrument Churches of Christ that are more or less related to Herald of Truth. This leaves out 40 millions of Baptists in the world, as well as millions of others among the Seventh Day Adventists and Mormons who immerse only believers --- and always "for the remission of sins" by the way. There are many more believers among all the sects that practice sprinkling who choose to be immersed in obedience to the Lord.

The Abilene figure even leaves out other segments of the Restoration Movement, some of whom were insisting on immersion into Christ for the remission of sins before anybody ever heard of the Churches of Christ. Two millions of these are in what is now called the Independent Christian Churches, who bear down on Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:16 as adamantly as any ACC graduate ever has. They are certainly baptized believers. It leaves out another two million Disciples of Christ who are by all means immersed believers.

The “estimated 2 million baptized believers” is a figure of some naive Church of Christ men who ought to go back to school and find out what is going on in the world. Only two million baptized believers? They have four million baptized believers in their own Restoration Movement that they ignore. And are not the 40 millions of Baptists baptized believers? Honest blunders coming out of Abilene we can take, but such downright irresponsibility and lack of charity as this is almost too much. It gives us the feeling that our Lord must have had in his encounters with the Pharisees.

It makes one wonder if the Abilene figure includes even those non-organ Churches of Christ that are different from Abilene and the *Advocate,* such as the premillennial and non-Sunday School churches. And how about Lufkin? Are they still to be counted as “baptized believers”? Are they among the two millions of Christians in the world? At what point is one removed from the list of Christians, or on what grounds does he get on to start with? The Christian Churches and Disciples are left out because of the organ, we suppose.

Our Abilene brethren have another problem in drawing their percentages: *how can they be so sure that the two million in the Churches of Christ are Christians?* How many were baptized so young that they knew not what they were doing, and have consequently never had a conversion experience? How many were baptized to please a wife or a husband rather than Jesus? How many who have been baptized are filled with so much carnality that they are anything but Christians?

Well, as I say, counting noses is bad business. Nobody knows how many Christians there are in the world. If one does try to draw some kind of an approximate figure, it is the height of arrogance to give only the full number of one’s own party. It assumes, first, that *all* those in one’s own party *are* Christians; and, second, that *none* in the other parties are. I beg to be excused from this kind of thing. People speak of my having “left” the Church of Christ. I have not ‘left” the Church of Christ, but I have left *that.*

To see how sick men can get in their self-righteousness, look at this sentence from the same leaflet: “Even though the church of our Lord has been termed the fastest growing group in America today, we are not keeping pace with the population growth.” I am not sure what news medium it was that said something about our being the fastest growing church in America, but I am sure that they did not say that “the Church of our Lord is the fastest growing group.” They rather said “the Church of Christ is the fastest growing group.” It takes no Solomon to see that this group that constitutes only .006% of the world’s population is “the Church of our Lord.” This excludes all other groups even within the Restoration Movement as being the Lord’s church. If this does not show how partyism can blind good men, pray tell me what does.

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get” (Matt. 7:1-2).

A WHISPER IN THE EAR

For several years now I have described my own relationship to the Restoration Movement as "a disciple at large," a point of view that seems clear enough to me, but which is apparently confusing to some. I had opportunity recently to put the idea to the test in a gathering of ministers from both the Church of Christ and Christian Church. The brother who introduced me as the speaker was himself of "Church of Christ background" but now identified with the Disciples of Christ. He wanted to know how he should introduce me. What was my "religious home" --- Church of Christ, Independent, or Disciple? From what he had heard he wondered how I could very well belong to any, and he had the notion that none of them really accepted me. So he wanted to know how I classified myself.

The question was fair and reasonable, for we live in a world where some kind of tag must be on everything. Everybody must be neatly tucked away into some arbitrary classification. We like it that way. Life is easier and simpler that way. Tags are convenient things. They help us not to have to think. So I understood the brother's question, I find myself tucking people away into little cubby holes, a habit that I find hard to break.

I explained to the inquiring brother and to the entire group that I saw no need in "leaving" anything (whether the Church of Christ, in which I was brought up, or anything else) or "joining" anything (whether Disciples or Independent Christian). Why cannot I be simply a disciple at large? This means that I will accept all who are *in Christ,* regardless of the differences of opinion. I reserve the right to love them all while differing with all. The Disciples of Christ are as much my brothers as those in the Church of Christ, and I can move as freely and comfortably among our premillennial churches and Independents as among those who nurtured me.

It is not a question with me as to which group among us holds views more in keeping with my own, but rather a matter of *brotherhood.* If a man is a son of my heavenly Father, he is my brother. If he is in union with Christ, as I believe I am, then we are saints together. I may differ with him about all sorts of things, whether instrumental music or salaried clergy --- and I probably do! --- but he is still my brother, and I accept him as such. And he is just as much my brother, *and just as dear to me as a brother,* as is the man who agrees with me on all my prejudices.

I also told this group that I do encounter difficulty in maintaining this posture, for no one group fully accepts a man unless he thinks of their party as the loyal church and rejects the others as disloyal. If you love *all* your brethren and treat them *all* as brethren, you are kept at arm's length by all. Only by loving one of our segments and hating all the others can one really be accepted.

I was pleasantly surprised when this group of ministers interrupted my remarks with applause. I took it that they thought my position reasonable and scriptural. Afterwards two very prominent Disciples (you see, here I am classifying) told me that my position was the only way we could ever be one brotherhood again. I was encouraged.

But one brother dropped a word in my ear that has haunted me ever since. He said to me quietly: “The reason you can talk like that is because you are a college professor and have your own support!”

As long as I live I’ll never forget those words. He wasn’t rebuking me, nor was he in any sense criticizing. It was a matter of fact. Already I have passed his words along to a number of my friends. They continue to brew in my mind. I am now asking myself: suppose you had married that *other* girl and had not gone on for advanced degrees and become a college professor; and suppose you had gone on and became the minister for some Church of Christ, and with several children to support you had no other way to make $150.00 a week --- how then, ole boy, would you talk about being “a disciple at large” who is as willing to have fellowship with Christian Church folk as with Church of Christ people?

I humbly yield to the possibility, if not the probability, of it being different if I were dependent upon anyone of these groups among us for my subsistence. Beside the pressure of financial security there is esteem, reputation, and position that party loyalty provides. We must not deceive ourselves as to the severity of these pressures. We must be sympathetic.

This is one more reason, apart from scriptural considerations, why I oppose the professional, clerical system that obtains among all our groups. It will always be true that the man who pays the piper is the one that calls the tune. We like to think that one’s love for brotherhood should be enough to break him away from the narrow confines of partyism, but there is that gnawing question that each man must face: *how will I make a living?*

It takes us back to the question that this journal has raised several *times: shall I choose Christ or the party?* True, one might well have Christ *within* the party structure, but with Christ he transcends the party and begins to reach out beyond party lines . . . and then what does the party do to him? This is a problem that each man must face for himself, but we should all be willing to lend a helping hand, and especially to *understand.*

“You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections” (2 Cor. 6:12).

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DALLAS CHURCH WITHDRAWS FROM MINISTER

We have waited for months to tell this story, for we wanted to be reasonably sure that it would do good, and especially that it would hurt no one. We now believe that it may do much good to tell it, and it should hurt no one at all if we present it in the spirit of sympathy and understanding for all concerned. This story has drama, and it touches the lives of a number of fine Christian people in Dallas. It is a tragic story in that it is another instance of our failure to let love win in our lives.

The principal characters in this story are Milton and Helen Stolz, who are as fine and intelligent Christians as one could ever expect to know. They love our Lord as much as any couple I know, and His blessed Name is often upon their lips. It so happens that Milton is a business associate of one of my brothers in Dallas, and it was in this connection that I first met him. This connection is, however, irrelevant to the story I have to tell, for the facts are the same regardless of business ties. It only adds to the drama somewhat.

When I first met Milton at my brother's office I had knowledge that he was "a Church of Christ minister" and was from a long line of Church of Christ people. I learned on that occasion that he was a graduate of Abilene Christian College, that his father was an elder in one of the leading congregations in Dallas, and. that his brother was also a minister in another state. Like myself, he had grown up in Dallas, and had attended some of the same schools I did; and being somewhat younger than I; he was a little boy in a congregation where I did some of my first preaching in Dallas. Furthermore, his parents and my older brothers were friends in one of Dallas' oldest congregations a generation ago. We were both immersed in our youth by W. L. Oliphant.

At this first meeting with Milton I noticed something distinctively different about him: *he was seeking.* He had a lot to say about surrendering oneself to the Lord, dedication, prayer, and especially about the leading of the Holy Spirit. He did not sound like "we" sound, and he was definitely seeking a depth of spirituality that few Christians seem to have, regardless of what church. He was at that time a frequent speaker in Churches of Christ here and there, and had only recently been associated with churches in San Angelo and Fort Worth as a minister. He was not at that time preaching for any congregation regularly, but, as I have said, was in business with my brother as a real estate developer, and was a member of the Preston Road Church of Christ (not the congregation where his father is an elder).

Milton impressed me as being too good to be true. There he was with as much a "Church of Christ background" as I myself, and a product of the same city and same congregations, and even an ACC man like myself, and yet every bit as unorthodox as myself! But he was unorthodox in a different way. During these first conversations I had with him I supposed that he was too far out for me, especially in respect to the role of the

Holy Spirit in the Christian's life, but I saw almost at once that he had something we all need more of: *a hungering and thirsting for the Spirit of God.* So I did not argue any points with him. I decided 1 might learn something, so for hours at a time I listened to him tell of his search for the reality of Christ in his life. It did me good to be quiet and listen. I was edified. It caused me to ask myself if 1 were seeking the deeper truths of God like that man.

I knew then that he had better stay in the business world and gain his own support, for he would never make it as a Church of Christ minister in any professional sense. I wondered what would happen to him in the Church of Christ, for it was simply a case of his being too spiritual for them (and I'm willing to include myself here).

Months later when I received the October 6, 1964 issue of *Firm Foundation* I found out what happened to Milton and Helen Stolz in the Church of Christ. What I saw read as follows:

To: Churches of Christ

> This is a notice of our reluctant but necessary withdrawal of fellowship from R. Milton Stolz and his wife, Helen, who placed membership at Preston Road November 23, 1963. In our judgment, they have accepted and taught serious doctrinal heresies regarding: the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and such manifestations of the Spirit as miracles of healing and speaking in tongues; the observance of the Supper, the use of the mechanical instrument of music in worship, the undenominational character and unity of the Church of Christ. Further, their extension of fellowship to, and active participation in, various "Holiness" denomination organizations have brought damaging reproach upon the church of the Lord.
>
> This action is taken after months of prayers and direct efforts to restore them. Since they have rejected all of our entreaties, we have no alternative but to withdraw from them and "mark them" as "factious" teachers of doctrines that cause divisions and occasions of stumbling (2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10).
>
> We request publicity of this action because of Milton Stolz's former prominence in the full-time ministry among churches of Christ and because of his widely publicized "testimonials" before such "Holiness" groups as the Assembly of God and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International.
>
> We hope that this action and its effect on relationships of the Stolz's to former brethren and acquaintances may produce changes in conviction and behavior that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
>
> Elders, Preston Road Church of
> Christ, Dallas, Texas

This bull of excommunication was, of course, prepared by the minister of the Preston Road church. I should like to challenge church historians to find an instance of a decree of disfellowship that was ever written by one other than a professional clergyman. It is the professional minister that both *composes* and *executes* such bulls, the reason being that orthodoxy must be protected.

Milton related to me some of the happenings leading to his withdrawal. On one occasion when he was lunching with the minister and one of the leading elders, he expressed himself freely about the Spirit of God, and was encouraged that there was as much agreement as there was. But the elder, who had heard rumblings of Milton's questionable views, turned the conversation to matters more definite. He asked: "Can you worship with people who use instrumental music?" Milton responded that he could, that he could worship anywhere with anyone that was a child of God. To which the elder said something like: "There is no need to talk any further."

Perhaps the elder could not then be so pure about the various points made about the Holy Spirit, for this can be rather vague and indefinite. But instrumental music was language he understood, and to him it was a symbol of apostasy. If a man would worship with people who use the instrument, then there is no further need for communication, for we have his number. This is the way the thinking goes with so many of our people. This same elder was later to say things like: "It is clear that Milton is not one of us." Here is a shepherd of the Lord's flock who is willing to make brotherhood contingent upon a certain view about an organ. One cannot even worship in a building where there is one without being rejected by his home church!

This was the substance of the charge about instrumental music. Milton was not advocating its use, and he certainly was not trying to bring an organ into the Preston Road church. He is in fact opposed to the organ, or at least indifferent to it. His search for spiritual meaning took him among those who use the instrument. This is heresy at Preston Road Church of Christ! His first mistake, of course, was *searching* for truth outside the walls of our own brotherhood, for the search is over if you are in the Church of Christ.

If it is true that the measure of a man's greatness is the size of the thing that gets his goat, then we might say that a person's concept of Christianity can be measured by the size of that which he makes the basis of brotherhood. It is tragic and pathetic that we have churches that will exclude a brother over an organ. With the world falling apart around us; and with the church faced with crises unparalleled in history, we spend our time castigating a good Christian brother for visiting a Baptist Church, or wherever there happens to be an organ. *An organ!* Is its absence or presence really that important? Is not the fellowship of the saints much more important?

The large Preston Road church spent an entire Lord's Day service for the withdrawal ceremony. The minister made appropriate remarks, citing the scriptures that he considered relevant, leading up to the withdrawal of a fellow minister, a brother who had labored as his own associate in a Fort Worth congregation sometime before. The elder who was satisfied that the congregation had a heretic in its midst when he learned that Milton had been going where there was an organ, read the bull of excommunication. And for one of the few times in our history a Church of Christ had withdrawn fellowship from one of its ministers. This never happened to *me*, for instance, which must mean that I am still *in*. It did not even happen to Billie Sol Estes, another of our preachers!

To many of us this was even more than a congregation withdrawal from a minister of the gospel. It was a bold illustration of what has happened to us in recent decades. We have become so stratified as a party that we are impervious to any fluidity of ideas, especially in those areas in which we differ from others. Fear motivates us. Preston Road was compelled to do something about Milton, for people were beginning to ask questions. And what would the other congregations say? When a church carefully takes all the scriptural steps for disciplinary action, lists changes that are within the traditions of the brotherhood, and then withdraws from the brother with scriptural exactness, it has protected itself from any disapproval from other churches as well as answered questions from within its own congregation. The idea that the elders are not to be questioned is so ingrained within us that Preston Road disposed of the problem of Milton Stolz simply by the elders expressing their judgment. Few will stop to ask why the same men will criticize the bishops of the Roman Catholic church for their assumed prerogatives over the souls of men.

Some of us will see something else in this withdrawal: *our preoccupation with doctrine over ethics in matters or discipline*. The Stolz's are known to be fine Christian people, and it is likely that Preston Road excluded from its fellowship some of its most devoted saints. We all know that all such churches have many lukewarm members, including the worldly and the vain, some of whom seldom if ever frequent the assembly, and these *remain* in the fellowship. However much one may follow the ways of the flesh in our churches, conforming more to the world than being transformed by the Spirit, he will likely remain in good standing so long as he is doctrinally sound.

An *orthodox* Billie Sol Estes can not only be tolerated by our brotherhood, but even be permitted to occupy pulpits across the country right up to the time that he was whisked away to prison. An *unorthodox* Milton Stolz was disposed of in short order for his doctrinal sins. Our preoccupation with doctrinal correctness leads us to receive one of them even when his life has been disgraceful before the entire world because of his doctrinal loyalty, and to reject the other even when his ethical behavior is impeccable because he digressed from the beaten path.

The statement of withdrawal reflects ideas about fellowship that should lead us to have some second thoughts. The last paragraph mentions "former brethren". At what point did Milton and Helen cease to be a brother and sister in the Lord? They had not *left* the Church of Christ, and insofar as I know (or the Preston Rood church knew) they had no intention of doing so. Did the withdrawal make them *former* brethren? One of the very passages referred to in the withdrawal says: "Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a *brother"* (2 Thess. 3 :15). Are they no long *in Christ?* Does a minister in a church have this kind of power of life and death, is one a brother one moment and *not* a brother the next, all because a minister reads a bull? Was it not this kind of thing that triggered the Protestant reformation?

And one might wonder what this language means: "their extension of fellowship to . . . various 'Holiness' denominational organizations have brought damaging reproach upon the church of the Lord." Can any *man* extend fellowship to anybody? I thought fellowship was a *relationship* created by God for all those who are in Christ. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). No man has the power of fellowship in his hands, including the Preston Road church, for this is determined by God on the basis of one's relationship to His Son.

This can only mean that Milton and Helen attended Holiness meetings, and that Milton sometimes took advantage of the opportunity of speaking to them. I myself heard him say that he could never join any sect, and that these churches were sectarian also, and that he chose simply to be a Christian and to "witness" (not one of our words) for Him anywhere he could. My wife and I attended one or two of these meetings ourselves with Milton. Does this mean we "extended fellowship" to them? This is party language. The Bible nowhere reads like that.

How does Preston Road know that Milton and Helen have "brought damaging reproach upon the church of the Lord"? Precisely how? Drunkenness? Adultery? Unpaid debts? By behaving like Billie Sol? None of these. It is that Milton has been going to "sectarian churches" ('the church of the Lord' in the bull is of course the Church of Christ) and talking about what Jesus means to him. I have heard him and this is what he does: *he talks about his love for Jesus!* He doesn't talk *against* anybody or any church, but he gives witness to the meaning of a Spirit-filled life. How does this damage the Lord's church? They may mean that Milton disturbed the Preston Road church by such behavior, or that he held doctrinal views contrary to the Church of Christ, or perhaps even that he *damaged* a church's image of itself, which we might call a *party* image. But how can one who is speaking sincerely and lovingly about what Jesus Christ means to him be damaging the church? I would come nearer concluding that one damages the church when he seeks to exclude such a brother from the congregation, or when he acts like Billie Sol.

The charge against Milton and his wife is heresy — "serious doctrinal heresies". Besides the ideas about the Holy Spirit these include instrumental music, the frequency of the Lord's Supper, and "the undenominational character and unity of the Church of Christ." Since *all* these are listed as "serious doctrinal heresies," we may conclude that anyone of them would be sufficient for excommunication. This means that if one does not believe that what we call the Church of Christ is *not* a denomination, and yet believes that all other churches *are*, then he is a heretic. Unless you believe that "we are right and everybody else is wrong" you will get booted out! Is this the kind of people we want to be!

The charge against this couple of being heretics because of "the frequency of the Lord's Supper" is unbelievably puerile. All this means is that Milton and Helen sometimes missed the Lord's Supper in attending these other churches. That they may have been wrong in doing this is one thing, but that they are *heretics* because of it is simply ridiculous. In the first place, the *frequency* of breaking bread may not be as clearly set forth in the scriptures as we have always supposed. Jesus made the time element vague, perhaps purposely so, when he said: "*As often as* you eat this bread . . . " I fear that we make Acts 20:7 mean more than it says. If the *frequency* of the Supper had been paramount in the mind of Jesus or Paul, they would surely have said something about it. Can we not see how someone would conclude that it is much deeper aspects of the Supper than the time element that really matter, and these they seek to realize "as often as" they partake.

But even if brethren are dead wrong when they fail to break bread *every* Sunday, this does not make them heretics. One can be wrong without being a heretic. How about ourselves? Are we not likely to have erroneous views about some matters (as difficult as this may be to conceive)? Do our errors make *us* heretics? A heretic is a troublemaker, a factious person. He is one who viciously seeks to build his own party to the destruction of the body of Christ. Such a one is described in Titus 3 as "perverted and sinful" and "self-condemned." A heretic is insincere, one who selfishly pursues his own proud way to the hurt of the church.

The Stolz's are no more like that than the people are who withdrew from them. One of the very verses referred to in the withdrawal document makes clear the character of the heretic: "Such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded (Rom. 16:18).

Milton and Helen were not trying to deceive anybody, nor were they trying to undermine the church and start a party of their own. They did not "teach" these things in any such manner as to cause trouble, but simply gave their views when it seemed appropriate. They were quite willing, as they still are, for other Christians to differ with them. They only wanted the freedom to interpret some of these things according to their own conscience. What is that we say, "In matters of opinion, liberty . . . "? If These things are not matters of opinion, I'd like to know what would be.

No man has the right to press his opinions upon others as matters of faith, making his own interpretations a test of fellowship. And if one persisted in this kind of behavior, he could justly be accused of heresy, whether his opinions were right or wrong. It is my understanding that Milton had no interest whatever in forcing his views upon others. But we have evidence enough that the Preston Road church has done this very thing. They have said in effect: if you don't see as we do about instrumental music, the frequency of the Supper, the work of the Holy Spirit, and even the idea that our church is the only true church, then we will not have fellowship with you.

This leads one to wonder who are, after all, the heretics in the eyes of God. I recall a passage from Alexander Campbell in which he said that in cases of excommunication throughout the history of the church it is nearly always the heretics that do the withdrawing!

Milton's notions about the Spirit may alarm us more that some of his other views. But let me insist that there is reason for latitude here also. Take Paul for instance. How would he get along at Preston Road with such remarks as: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Cor. 14:18). Here we have at least one "loyal" preacher that spoke in tongues! I know that this is not one of our passages, and it doesn't apply today, and all that. But whatever we say or however much we don't like it, Paul spoke in tongues — *and he thanked God that he did!*. It is true that Paul chose to speak in tongues *as private devotion*, choosing to speak in an understandable language in the assembly (verse 19), but yet he charges the church as follows: "So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and *do not forbid speaking in tongues"* (verse 39). Not only does Preston Road forbid it, they will withdraw from anybody that even believes such a thing. I suppose, then, that we know what would happen to Paul at Preston Road.

What is this that we say about *following the New Testament?* Don't we really mean: following our own prejudicial beaten path through the New Testament? Anything that doesn't jibe with our own brand of orthodoxy we neatly pass by with a wave of the hand: "it doesn't apply today." Has it ever occurred to us that other sincere believers in the Lord may find meaning in these passages that we so glibly ignore? How is it that we are so wise that we know precisely what applies and what doesn't?

What other recourse was there for the elders at Preston Road, if any? Was this withdrawal really necessary? What might an eldership have done that believes in the freedom of an individual's conscience before God ("It is before his own master that he stands or falls" — Rom. 14:4) and yet seeks to maintain the integrity of the congregation? Surely the scriptures give us the answer to this, and it is in that fourteenth chapter of Romans. "As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions" (Verse 1). Three times that chapter warns against passing judgment on our brother, or "the servant of another." Verse 13 urges us to decide never to put a stumbling

block or hindrance in. the way of a brother, and verse 15 says: “If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love.”

In this chapter Paul makes it clear that our first thought toward an erring or weak brother should be his relationship to the Father. Jesus is his Lord, not ourselves. “If we live, we live to the *Lord*” — not the brethren. “If we die, we die to the Lord.” A brother is not responsible to us. He is to stand before his Master in judgment. We therefore need not judge him. Thus Paul concludes in verse 12: “So each of us shall give account of himself to God.” We must make sure that we are “walking in love” toward our brother, and especially that we do not discourage him in his effort to stand before God with a good conscience.

The tender words of Gal. 6:1 might fit here: “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.”

What does all this mean? Is it *an act of love* to thrust a brother from our midst? We readily admit that a congregation must be protected from a vicious factionist whose only interest is to deceive others for his own glory, and the passages referred to in the withdrawal document would have relevance to this kind of person. But the Stolz’s are not like the sensuous people of Rom. 16:17, but like the well-meaning brethren of Romans 14 who hold different views.

So what is the answer? In view of the above scriptures the elders might have done nothing at all. Rom. 14:1 says, “Receive him who differs with you, but not with the idea of arguing with him,” and that is what they would be doing. Simply accept him as a brother and let it go at that. If other members should raise questions about what Milt and Helen believe about the Holy Spirit, the elders could turn to Rom. 14 and say a word about the freedom that we have to differences of opinion, and let the matter be dropped.

Now if one who is granted this liberty by his brothers uses it as “an opportunity for the flesh” rather than in love (Gal. 5:13), then the elders would have to take action, for this would be *factious* behavior. But this would not be so much a matter of the views he holds as the evil intention of his behavior: *to disrupt the church.*

This means than an eldership in a congregation where some have begun to believe “strange” things about the Holy Spirit and have even claimed to speak in tongues, could say to such ones: “We do not claim to have experienced all the joys available to the Christian. If you have tapped resources that give you deeper satisfaction, we rejoice with you. We only ask you to remember that in any congregation the people are at different levels of understanding, and you must not conduct yourself in any way that would discourage them. As we understand the scriptures, these blessings of the Spirit that you say you have, are most appropriate in *private* devotions. So, please, dear brethren, keep these matters as private property, and do not cause trouble over them. This does not mean that you cannot explain your position when you are asked, or even that you cannot speak of

these things when you are teaching, but always as your own interpretation, and never with any idea of forcing it upon others."

If those who believed in the tongues followed the admonition of the elders, there would never be any trouble. If they did not, then the elders would be forced to take stronger action, not so much because of a belief in tongues (after all, that's scriptural!) but for faction. This is the meaning of unity and brotherhood. We do *not* "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" by running people off who come up with ideas different from our own (even if they are dead wrong). Unity is not a forced conformity. Suppose Milton and Helen had knuckled under and given up their ideas, would that have been a victory for unity? Actually the unity between people has little to do with how much they differ or disagree. Men can see eye to eye on everything and still not be one. Oneness is the uniting of diverse elements by means of some cohesive force upon which all the elements depend. That cohesive power is the love of Christ. Without that they can never be one, however much they might agree; with that love, they can never be separated, however much they might disagree.

There is no virtue in conformity. It is nothing if a church is composed of people who see eye to eye on everything. It only means that no one does any thinking for himself, or if he does, he feels too unfree to express himself in any way. But there is virtue when a church encourages its people to grow and to think for themselves, and even to be different; and for there to be such love prevailing that oneness is always manifest amidst the diversity. This is what Paul meant when he told us to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:' (Eph.4:3)

Elderships must realize that keeping the peace in a congregation is not a matter of being doctrinal watchdogs or of making sure that no one comes up with erroneous views. Divergent views must rather be encouraged. As for whether they are "error" can hardly be determined always by immediate and arbitrary methods, but by time and discussion. Give men time and they will grow; give error time (and sufficient airing) and it will die. Peace comes to a congregation only through the love of Christ. The elders' task is to keep the brethren conscious of "the perpetual debt of love," as Phillips translates Rom. 13:8. The elders are not to *restrain* by demanding doctrinal conformity, but are to *constrain* through the love of Christ. One is born of fear, the other of charity.

When we are sufficiently constrained by the love of Christ rather than restrained by orthodoxy such an instance of the rejection of Milton and Helen Stolz cannot occur. The "love that bears all things" will hold men together amidst doctrinal disparity. Preston Road failed with Milton and Helen only because they let their *love* for them fail. It is our prayer that this shameful chapter in the history of the Dallas churches will never be repeated, and that this one in some way might be rewritten. But only Preston Road can do that, and they can do it only when they are overwhelmed by the perpetual debt of love.

"And above all these things put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3; 14) . — *The Editor*

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A TEXAN CORRECTS LIFE

By Robert Meyers

A guest editor in one of the most popular Church of Christ religious papers recently attacked the December 25th *Life* issue on the Bible. He said that readers who wanted to know more about the Bible should not waste their time reading the issue. This seems excessive to me. I thought the *Life* essay a reasonably good popularization of views long held by the majority of Biblical scholars. Perhaps what the writer really meant was that if readers preferred knowing only those facts taught in our particular group, no need to read the issue. And this would be good advice, for Church of Christ interpretations are quite ignored and some of our cherished views of inspiration get rough treatment.

The editorialist flays what he calls the "variableness of modernistic scholarship." This has long been a favorite game in our camp. When scholars disagree, or modify their theories, or finally give a theory up completely in view of new evidence, such men as the writer of this editorial derive massive comfort from it. They fairly chortle with glee, pointing the finger of scorn at unstable "scholars." What they appear to value above all else is an unyielding, adamant position on every point.

This is hardly surprising, since it is precisely the kind of religious approach they have been taught. One who "has" the truth certainly need never ponder the possibility of revision or change. He may be only twenty, but his head is a treasure of all the answers to all the vital questions and he cannot even imagine new evidence that might sway him. When he sees thoughtful men modify their views, or relinquish them in the light of research, it strikes him as proof that they are waves of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed, while he is a towering mountain of certainty. That such incredibly assured people should always get around to scoffing at the "consummate egotism" of scholars who change their minds occasionally is a supreme irony! If there is arrogance abroad, it must surely lie with those who think themselves impervious to change and who look contemptuously upon men who make the inevitable adjustments of healthy mental growth.

The attack on *Life* was deplorably shallow and shrill. It must have led many in our brotherhood to lament anew the tragic death of thoughtful writing in our most popular journals. Our keenest minds, including those in the Bible faculties of our best schools, do

not publish in these papers. It is a shame, for the masses in the Churches of Christ deserve better nourishment than they are getting.

It would take a book to illustrate the lack of perception which went into the *Life* denunciation, but one example may fruitfully be given. The writer was shocked because the magazine said there were two creation stories in *Genesis* and that they contradict one another. So easily does the writer dispose of this matter that one wonders whether he has ever analyzed the chapters in question or pored earnestly over the problems long known to be there. Apart from the different names for God used in the two accounts, there are striking stylistic differences discernible even in an English translation. The *Genesis* 1:1-11 : : 4a account is solemn, ceremonial, formulaic; it may with great profit be read in the new Anchor Bible, where its rhythmic stateliness and careful structuring are obvious. The *Genesis* II:4b-24 account, on the other hand, is much more relaxed and prosaic. It lacks the formulas, the recurrences of particular phrases. It is freer, more varied, more picturesque.

But more importantly, the first account gives this order of creation: vegetables, animals, man --- while the second account tells us that the order was man, vegetables, animals, and then woman. Those who *must* harmonize the accounts make ingenious efforts; I can only say that none of them have seemed persuasive to me. The first account suggests the simultaneous creation of male and female, while the second suggests that quite a long period intervened between the creation of man and the creation of woman. In fact, in the second account, God is represented as trying to satisfy Adam with various creatures as companions and only makes woman when “none proved to be the aid that would be fit for man” (Anchor Bible).

But this is tedious; those who really care about such a problem will study intensively the analyses given in the critical commentaries, in the introduction to the new Anchor *Genesis,* and in the host of specialized books and articles dealing with it. The important thing is that our editorialist ought either to reveal more awareness of the vexing problems, or else be gently reminded by the editor of the paper himself that such problems *do* exist, and that *Life* magazine is not necessarily printing pages of pure nonsense.

In addition to the dismaying lack of intellectual humility, there is the sad realization that men who really ought to protest --- the trusted leaders and teachers of the Church of Christ in Texas --- will say nothing about the bad taste and intellectual puerility of such an article. Many of our men in Texas alone know how misleading such an article is. They need to take the leadership in our papers and grapple wisely with such issues as the *Life* articles present. Every religious group has poorly informed persons who are eager to write articles; ours, unfortunately, gives them the field uncontested and causes the impression to be left that they represent the best thinking the group can manage.

Thomas Campbell: Man of the Book by L. G. McAllister is an informative account of the Restoration Movement from the standpoint of the father of Alexander Campbell. There is a chapter on *The Declaration and Address,* showing the significance of this great document in our history. $3.15

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THE BROTHER WHO TRIED

By Jim Olive

Brother Garfield went out behind the new modern church building and sat down to rest under the new green leaves of the huge maple tree. He was completely exhausted after having worked all morning packing his books and other personal belongings that he had used in his study for the past eight months. It had been such a short while since he had come to serve as the minister for the Main Street Church of Christ in New Jerusalem, Tennessee. He had come to New Jerusalem with a determination and ambition to make the most of his opportunities to serve the Master.

In the beginning everything had gone along just fine. Bro. Garfield had been meeting all the members of the congregation and had learned which ones had the higher spiritual values. After the first month he had had their worship planned and printed so that each member of the congregation could know what was happening. Of course it would take time for some of the members of the congregation, who had been more involved in observing traditions than they had in searching for truth, to adjust to a planned worship. Surprisingly, however, most of the members were happy to be a parr of anything that would make their worship more meaningful. Bro. Garfield was gratified for he knew that many of his brethren had not been so readily accepted in their plea for meaningful worship. It just seemed to good to be true. It was. About two weeks after the printed form had been used a preacher from a neighboring congregation heard about it. He was so upset that he just had to come to talk with Bro. Garfield. He moved slowly in the conversation for he feared that Bro. Garfield, who was obviously immature in the faith, would react violently. Bro. Garfield welcomed him and talked patiently for three hours. When it was apparent that Bro. Garfield would not see the error of his ways, the preacher told him *his* elders were going to be forced to withdraw from the entire congregation. He even threatened to expose him in the TRADITION ADVOCATE, a popular publication of his party.

As weeks went by the neighboring congregations began to "cool" and order was restored to the brotherhood in New Jerusalem. His peacefulness came just in time for the lectureship at Alexander Campbell College, the white Church of Christ college in New Jerusalem. Of course the colored brethren, if you would call them brethren, went to Racoon John Smith Institute across town. The lectureships were well attended in spite of the fact that the Bible Department Chairman had shown liberal tendencies the year before by asking the congregations to support the college out of the treasury. (Of course the treasury is scriptural, traditionally.) Bro. Garfield was not asked to participate in any way. He was permitted to attend the annual dinner for preachers given by the college. The loyal brethren did keep an eye on him.

A short while after the lectureship had closed Bro. Garfield began thinking about what his subject would be on Easter Sunday. He read Romans 14 and decided that since all of the people would have their minds centered on the death and resurrection of Christ that he would take advantage of the situation and preach on that subject. Since he had begun the use of the printed order he had also planned the songs to go with the sermon. Everyone in the congregation felt that since their sect felt that they should observe the resurrection every Sunday, nothing could possibly be wrong with doing it on Easter. By some coincidence one of the faculty members from ACC (Alexander Campbell College) was present for the service. Bro. Garfield, the kind and gracious man that he was, asked Brother Cleaver to pray. The service was beautiful until Brother Cleaver led his prayer. Instead of leading the prayer he preached a sermonette on the damnable practice of observing the resurrection on Easter. Later he "walked out" in the middle of the singing of "Christ the Lord is risen today" The entire congregation was shocked.

It was not long until the elders received a letter from Ima Churchmaster, Editor of the TRADITION ADVOCATE. They were told that if they did not get rid of that heretic the whole congregation would be excommunicated. Bro. Garfield heard of the letter and resigned the next Sunday. There was not a dry eye in the audience as they listened, for the last time, to the man that had made Christ's love mean so much to them. — Box 513, David Lipscomb College, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

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OFFICE NOTES

"The Campbell Special" will soon be off the press. This is April-May number of 44 pages in special cover showing the Campbell Mansion, with an Introduction by Perry Gresham. Available at two copies for $1.00 to our readers. We believe this attractive booklet will be ideal to hand to friends who might be interested in reading an interesting and concise account of the Restoration Movement.

Back issues of *Restoration Review* are available at three for $1.00 of the quarterly numbers (ten of the 20 issues are available) and ten cents each of the monthly numbers (all 15 are available).

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